

Executive Summary of the study "Muslim Life in Germany 2020": Study commissioned by the German Islam Conference

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Federal Office
for Migration
and Refugees



German
Islam
Conference

Executive Summary of the study "Muslim Life in Germany 2020"

Study commissioned by the German Islam Conference

Katrin Pfündel / Anja Sticks / Kerstin Tanis



Forschung



Research Centre
Migration, Integration and Asylum

Objectives, procedure, and target groups of the MLD 2020 study

The Research Centre Migration, Integration and Asylum of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees conducted the study "Muslim Life in Germany 2020 (MLD 2020)" on behalf of the German Islam Conference. The central aims of the study include to

- Calculate the number of Muslims with a migration background from 23 predominantly Muslim countries of origin as well as to describe their structure,
- Analyze their religiosity, everyday religious practice, and various aspects of integration as well as changes over time,
- Classify the findings by comparing them with persons of other religious affiliations from the same countries of origin and with people without a migration background.

The nationally representative survey was conducted between July 2019 and March 2020 based on a standardized questionnaire. To take the diversity of Muslim life in Germany into consideration, persons with a migration background from Turkey and 22 other predominantly Muslim countries of origin from the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa, and South-East Europe aged 16 and over were taken into account. Regarding the selection of countries, it was ensured that relevant (in terms of Muslim population) countries of origin were included.

Data sources for this research report

For the analyses, we use data from a total of **4,538 interviews with persons from predominantly Muslim countries of origin**. For comparative purposes, we also conducted interviews with **582 people without a migration background**. MLD 2020 is, thus, currently the largest nationally representative study on Muslim life in Germany.

In the interviews, data was collected on all persons living in the households. Therefore, it is possible to ascertain socio-structural information, including in particular the religious affiliation of children and adolescents under the age of 16. This data on a total of **14,354 persons with a migration background living in the households** forms the basis for the extrapolation of the total number of Muslims from predominantly Muslim countries of origin living in Germany (so-called household data set).

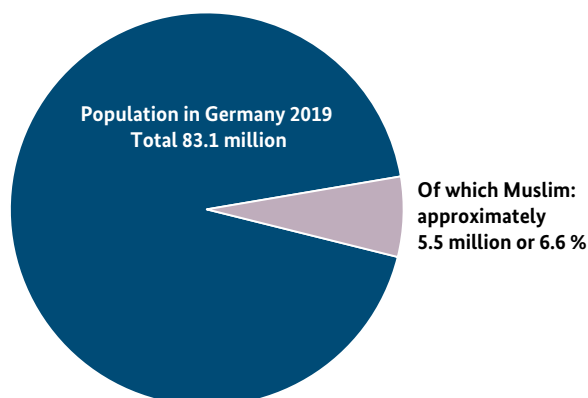
The full version of the research report with a comprehensive presentation of the results is available at: <http://www.bamf.de/fb38-mld2020>.

1 Central results based on all persons living in the households reached, including children and adolescents under 16 years of age

Between 5.3 and 5.6 million Muslims with a migration background from a predominantly Muslim country of origin live in Germany

The data of the MLD 2020 study show: The number of Muslims (including members of the Alevi religion) with a migration background from a predominantly Muslim country of origin living in Germany in 2019 comprises between 5.3 million and 5.6 million persons. According to the German microcensus, Germany had 83.1 million inhabitants in 2019. This means that, in 2019, the share of Muslims with a migration background in the total population amounts to between 6.4 % and 6.7 % (Figure 1). The number of Muslims without a migration background (these are mainly people who have converted to Islam) could not be determined due to their small number in relation to the total population. Among respondents without a migrant background, nobody states to be Muslim.

Figure 1: Proportion of Muslims with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin as a percentage of the total population in Germany in 2019 (mean value)



Sources: German microcensus 2019 as well as extrapolation based on MLD 2020, data set with all household members, unweighted.

Note: Alevis are included in the group of members of the Muslim religion.

Looking at the development of the Muslim population in Germany over time indicates that its number and proportion have increased. An earlier extrapolation by the BAMF Research Centre shows that between 4.4 and 4.7 million Muslims lived in Germany on 31 December 2015. Their share of the then 82.2 million inhabitants in Germany was between 5.4 % and 5.7 %. Accordingly, the number of Muslims increased by 0.9 million persons between 2015 and 2019 and their share of the total population in Germany increased by around one percentage point.

The composition of the Muslim population has become more diverse in terms of countries of origin - a clear majority belongs to the Sunni faith.

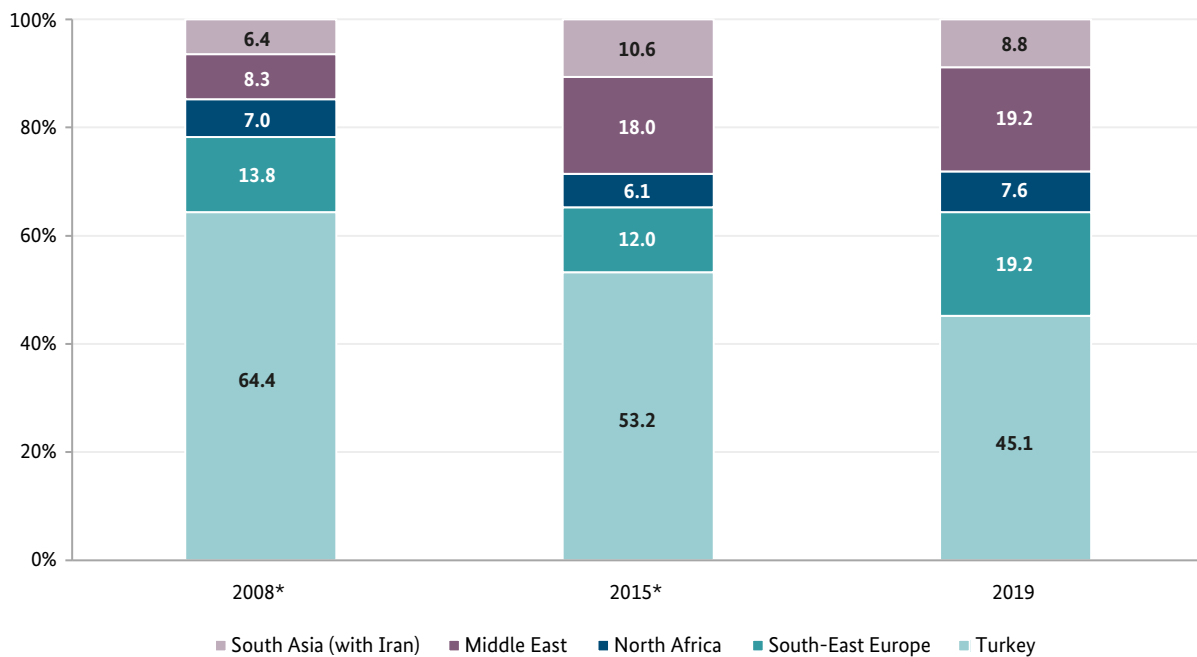
A total of 2.5 million Muslims come from Turkey. They make up 45 % of the total number of Muslims in Germany (mean value, Figure 2). In 2019, persons of Turkish origin continue to be by far the largest origin group among Muslims in Germany.

Around 55 % of Muslims come from various other regions of origin¹. Almost 1.5 million people or 27 % come from an Arabic-speaking country in the Middle East (19%) or North Africa (8 %). The dominant origin country among Arabic-speaking Muslims is Syria with around 729,000 individuals. 19 % of Muslims come from South-East European countries of origin. About 9 % of the Muslims have a migrant background from a non-Arabic speaking country in South Asia.

Overall, Muslims in Germany form a diverse group with regard to their regional origin. Looking at the development over time shows that the plurality has increased in recent years (Figure2). The proportion of

¹ For the analyses, different origin countries were grouped into four regional groups as follows: South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan), Middle East (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia) and South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).

Figure 2: Muslims from predominantly Muslim countries of origin by region of origin in 2008, 2015 and 2020 in percent (mean value)



Source: Extrapolations of the Research Centre Migration, Integration and Asylum of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees for 2008, 2015, and 2019.

*2008 and 2015: Here without Muslims from Central Asia/CIS as well as Southern Africa.

Muslims in Germany with a Turkish migration background has decreased since 2008 in favor of people from all other regions of origin. Individuals of Turkish origin no longer make up the absolute majority among Muslims, as they did in 2015.

With regard to the denominational belonging, a clear majority is Sunni (74 %). Worldwide, the proportion of members of the Sunni faith is estimated at 85 %. With 8 %, a relatively large proportion of Muslims are Alevi, almost all of whom have a Turkish migration background. 4 % of Muslims in Germany are Shiite. Ahmadis and other denominations each account for one percent. 12 % of the Muslims were unable or unwilling to state their religious denomination and answered "don't know" or refused to answer at all.

Muslims form a relatively young population group; almost half of them have the German citizenship.

21 % of the Muslim religious community are children or adolescents under the age of 15. Another 22 % are between 15 and 24 years old, i.e. in a phase of life in

which many have not yet completed their vocational training or are at the beginning of their professional career. Only 5 % are older than 64 years, i.e. they are approaching or have already reached retirement age. In the total population, the proportion of those over 64 is, at 21 %, more than four times higher. Overall, the Muslim population in Germany is therefore a very young group.

Another important result with regard to the social structure is that almost half of the Muslims in Germany are German nationals (47 %). Among children and adolescents under the age of 18, the figure is as high as 68 %. There are clear differences between individuals from different regions of origin. On the one hand, these can be attributed to the immigration history, on the other hand, to the prerequisites for naturalization. Muslims who come from North Africa are disproportionately often German nationals, with a share of 63 %. The proportion of German citizens is particularly low among Muslims from the Middle East (16 %), a region of origin from which more people have immigrated to Germany in recent years.

2 Key findings based on respondents aged 16 and over

Clear differences by region of origin with regard to immigrant generation and length of stay

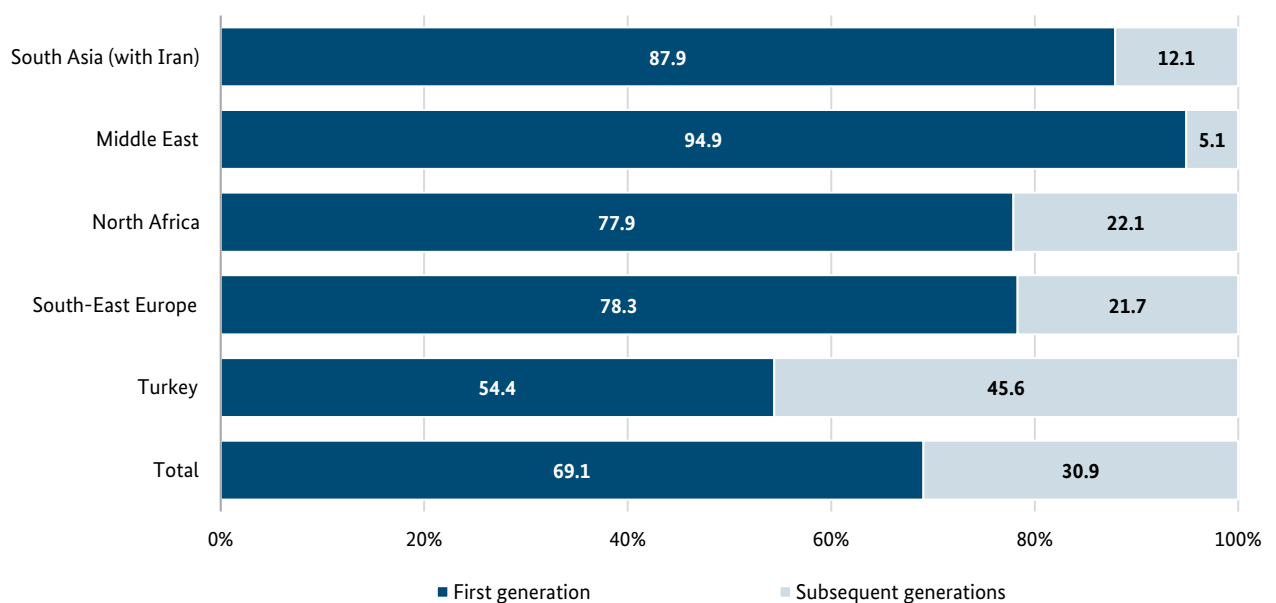
The majority of Muslims with a migration background from a predominantly Muslim country of origin aged 16 and over belong to the first generation of immigrants, i.e. they immigrated themselves (69 %). However, there are differences by region of origin: Among Muslims with a Turkish migration background, first generation-migrants make up 54 % as opposed to 95 % among individuals from the Middle East (Figure 3).

The differences between members of different religions in terms of generational belonging are relatively small if regional origin is taken into account at the same time. In other words: Regardless of their religious affiliation, people of Turkish origin have a relatively high proportion of individuals born in Germany compared to other groups. Conversely, persons aged 16 and over from the Middle East, were almost always

born abroad. It is known from previous research that many aspects of the integration process are influenced by whether people with a migration background immigrated to Germany themselves or were born in Germany. This, therefore, constitutes an important finding to explain differences between origin groups.

In addition to generational belonging, the length of residence in Germany is important for the integration process. Our analyses show that first-generation Muslims from Turkey have been living in Germany for 32.1 years on average, while first-generation Muslims from the Middle East came to Germany on average 6.4 years ago. This finding points in the same direction as the distribution by immigrant generation: Turkey is connected with Germany by a very long history of immigration. Conversely, many individuals from the Middle East have only recently arrived in Germany as refugees and are still in the middle of the integration process.

Figure 3: Muslims with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin, by region of origin and immigrant generation (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 3,472.

There are clear differences between persons with and without a migration background with regard to their family situation.

Individuals with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin are almost twice as likely to live in a household with children than people without a migration background (46 % to 24 %). The average household size and number of children living in the household are also higher. One explanation for this can be found in the different age structures: People without a migration background are on average 12 years older than people with a migration background, so that adult children sometimes no longer live in the same household. If children live in the household, the dominant form of living in both groups is the classic nuclear family, i.e. two parents living in a partnership with one or more children. Single parents are relatively rare, both among people with and without a migration background.

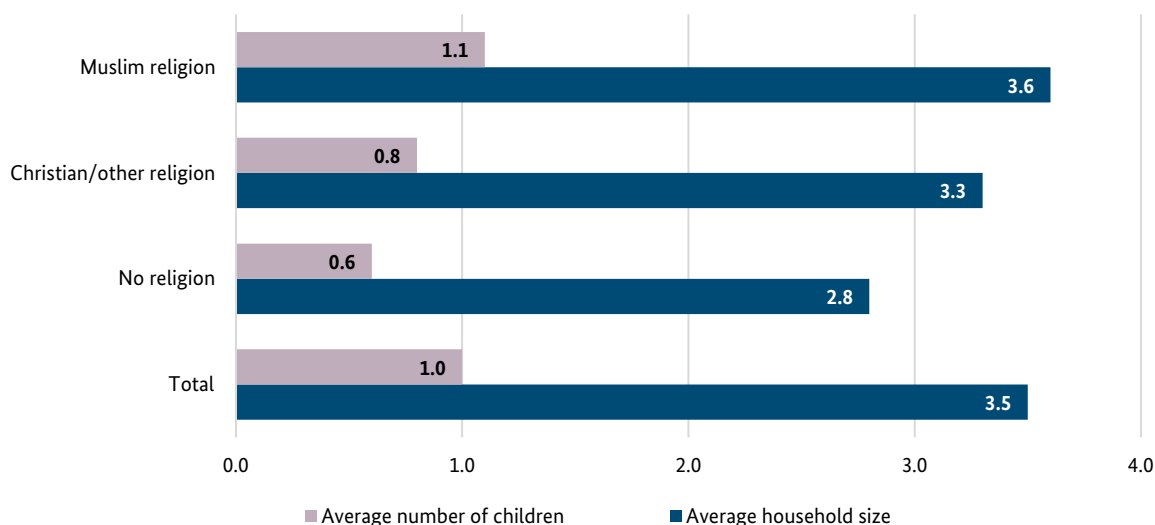
The comparison of persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin of different religious affiliations shows that Muslims tend to live in larger households (Figure 4). However, the differences to people who belong to other religions are rather small. The average household size for Muslims is 3.6 persons, for individuals with another religion it is 3.3 persons. The households of individuals from predominantly Muslim countries of origin without a religious affiliation are smaller, with an average of 2.8 persons.

People with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin are strong believers - regardless of their religious affiliation.

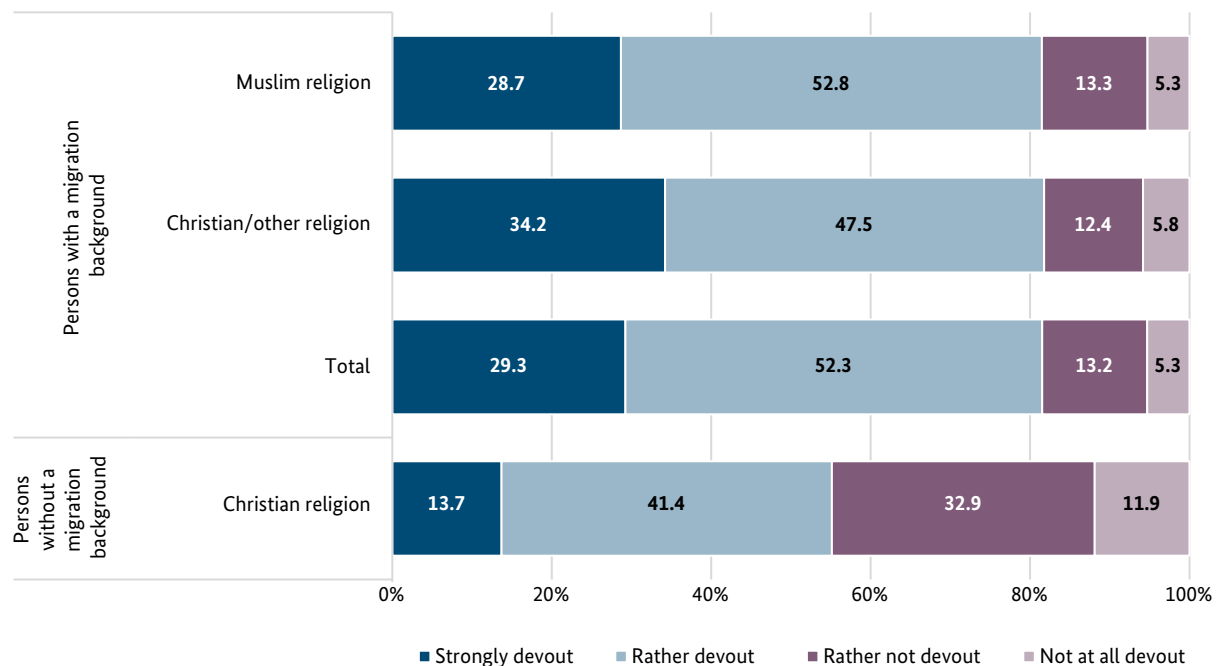
People living in Germany with a migration background from the predominantly Muslim countries of origin included in the MLD 2020 study are significantly more devout than people without a migration background. Among individuals who come from one of these countries, 82 % say they are strongly or rather devout (Figure 5). This applies largely irrespective of their religious affiliation, i.e., both for Muslims as well as for individuals who are Christian or belong to another religion. For Christians without a migrant background, the figure is 55 %. The difference to persons with a migration background is thus 27 percentage points. Taken together, these findings indicate that it is not so much a person's religious affiliation as their origin that has an influence on their devoutness.

Within the Muslim population, significant differences exist by region of origin: The highest proportion of strongly or rather devout persons is among Muslims who come from North Africa (94 %). Muslims with a migration background from South-East Europe and Turkey tend to be less religious than Muslims from other countries. However, with 75 % and 79 % respectively, strongly or rather devout people still form the clear majority in these two groups.

Figure 4: Average household size and number of children among persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin, by religious affiliation (in persons)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,538.

Figure 5: Degree of devoutness by migration background and religious affiliation (in percent)

Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,282.

Note: Persons with a migration background refer exclusively to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

Muslim women are slightly more devout than Muslim men. This gender difference can be observed not only among Muslims, but also among members of other religions from the origin countries included in this study, as well as among people without a migration background. Another relevant factor is generational belonging. Those born in Germany tend to be less devout than first-generation immigrants.

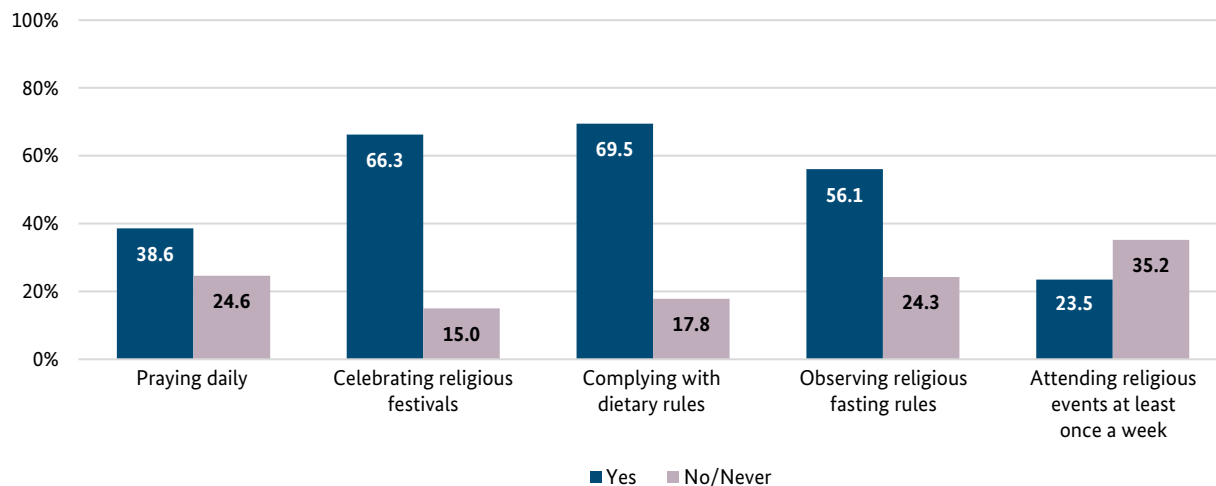
Religious practice is an integral part of life for many Muslims

Religion is not only of great importance in the subjective perception of many Muslims, but also an integral part of their everyday life: Religious rules and practices are often observed and integrated into everyday life (Figure 6). This applies in particular to dietary rules. 70 % of Muslims unconditionally affirm that they observe these rules and practices (excluding respondents who observe them in part). Two-thirds say they celebrate religious festivals (66 %, not including respondents

who celebrate some of them). The proportion of people who pray daily is, by contrast, at 39 % much lower. At the same time, there are also a substantial number of Muslims who say they do not observe the respective religious rules. For example, one in four Muslims say they never pray. Just as many do not fast. Overall, however, the proportion of Muslims who regularly observe religious rules outweighs those who never do in almost all areas surveyed.

One exception is the attendance of religious events. The proportion of Muslims who visit a mosque or a Cem house at least once a week is relatively low at 24 %. 35 % of respondents say they never attend religious events. One reason for the low percentage of people who regularly attend religious services is that, according to the prevailing view, participation in the Friday prayer is a religious duty only for men. Participation furthermore presupposes an appropriate local offer.

Figure 6: Proportion of Muslims who practice their religion regularly or not at all, by various areas of everyday religious practice (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 3,372.

Note: Muslims refer exclusively to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin. The proportion of persons who only partially observe the corresponding practices or do so less frequently is not shown here.

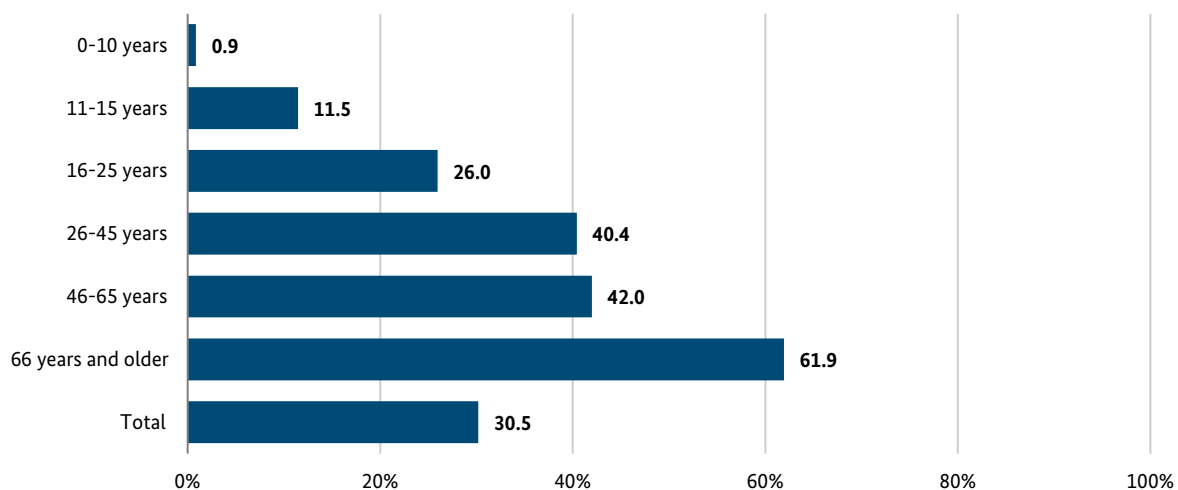
The majority of Muslim women does not wear headscarves.

Less than every third Muslim woman wears a headscarf (Figure 7). Whether a headscarf is worn depends strongly on age. Less than one percent of girls of kindergarten or primary school age (up to 10 years of age) wear headscarves. The proportion increases with the onset of puberty.

Muslim women aged 16 and over who were interviewed themselves were also asked about reasons why they wear a headscarf or why they do not. They could choose several reasons.

The reason most frequently cited by women who wear a headscarf is religious obligation (89 %). Expectations from family and/or acquaintances are cited by less than 5 % as a reason for wearing the headscarf. The majority of Muslim women who do not wear a headscarf also name self-interested reasons. They do not perceive it as necessary for practicing their faith (77 %) or do not feel like covering their head (56 %). However, more than a third fear disadvantages from wearing a headscarf (35 %).

Figure 7: Proportion of Muslim women with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin who wear a headscarf, by age group (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set with all household members, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,996.

More than one third of Muslims aged 16 and older feel fully or partially represented by at least one Islamic association in Germany. Lack of representation is mainly due to a lack of awareness.

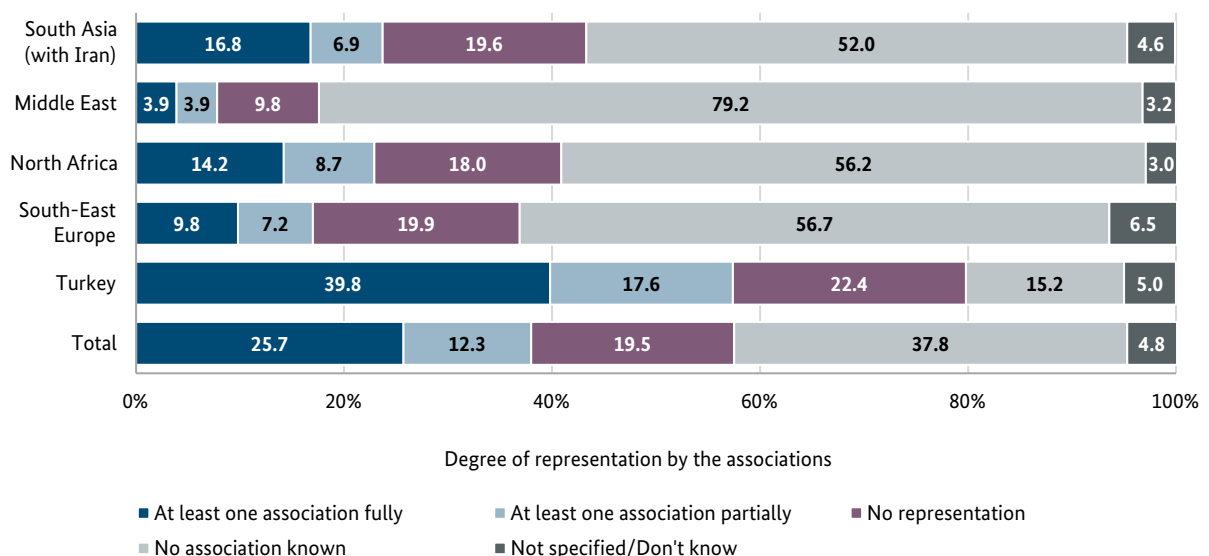
Within the framework of the study, the level of awareness and representation of seven Islamic associations organized in the Coordinating Council of Muslims in Germany² and six other associations³ were surveyed. The three associations with a Turkish influence, Alevi Community Germany (AABF; 32 %), Islamic Community Millî Görüş e.V. (IGMG; 33 %) and Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion e.V. (DITIB; 42 %), have the highest levels of awareness. These associations are known in particular to Muslims with a Turkish migration background. More detailed analyses show that Muslims in general are most familiar with those associations who are oriented towards their own group of origin or faith.

38 % of Muslims say that they feel fully or partially represented by at least one of the associations in Germany considered (Figure 8). 20 % deny full or partial representation. The degree of representation is especially high among Muslims from Turkey: 40 % feel their interests to be fully represented by at least one association, 18 % at least partially. This reflects the fact that this origin group, which has already been residing in Germany for a long time, has built up a broadly diversified religious infrastructure tailored to different needs. The level of representation is much lower among Muslims from other origin countries. In most cases, however, the lower acceptance is not due to explicit rejection. Rather, these individuals are often not familiar with the associations mentioned. Muslims from the Middle East are least likely to see themselves represented (8 %). Almost 80 % of the individuals from this group, which is characterized by recent immigration, state that they are not familiar with any of the associations mentioned.

- 2 The following associations were considered: Islamic Community Millî Görüş e.V. (IGMG), Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (IRD), Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion e.V. (DITIB), Union of Islamic-Albanian Centres in Germany (UIAZD), Association of Islamic Cultural Centres (VIKZ), the Central Council of Moroccans in Germany e.V. (ZRMd) and the Central Council of Muslims in Germany e.V. (ZMD).
- 3 These are the following associations: Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ), Alevi Community Germany (AABF), Alliance Maliki Community Germany e.V. (BMG), Islamic Community of Bosniaks in Germany - Central Council. (BMG), Islamic Community of Bosniaks in Germany - Central Council e.V. (IGBD), Islamic Community of Shiite communities e.V. (IGS) and Liberal-Islamic Association e.V. (LIB).

Differentiating between denominations reveals that primarily associations of smaller denominations succeed in uniting their target group. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ) is fully or partially supported by 81 % of the members of this denomination. 47 % of Alevis feel represented by the AABF. A similar picture emerges if one looks at the degree of representation by the large associations within their actual target group. More than half of Sunni Muslims of Turkish origin feel fully or partially represented by the DITIB

Figure 8: Full or partial representation by at least one Islamic association among Muslims, by region of origin (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 3,472 (only Muslims).

Note: Muslim persons refer exclusively to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

(52 %) and more than a quarter by the IGMG (27 %). Of the Bosnian Sunnis, 31 % consider themselves fully or partially represented by the IGBD.

German language skills and educational attainment are strongly influenced by migration-related indicators

The majority of Muslims consider themselves to have a good or very good knowledge of the German language (79 %). Among Muslims born in Germany, almost all rate their language skills as very good (93 %). Analyses differentiating between regions of origin also show poorer German language skills to be primarily due to shorter periods of residence. For example, Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East, who on average have the shortest length of stay, tend to rate their knowledge of German as poorer.

The self-assessed German language skills of Muslims and members of other religions with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin hardly differ if the respective region of origin is taken into consideration. This result is in line with the results of the MLD 2008 study.

The educational level of persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin tends to be lower than that of persons without a migration background, irrespective of the im-

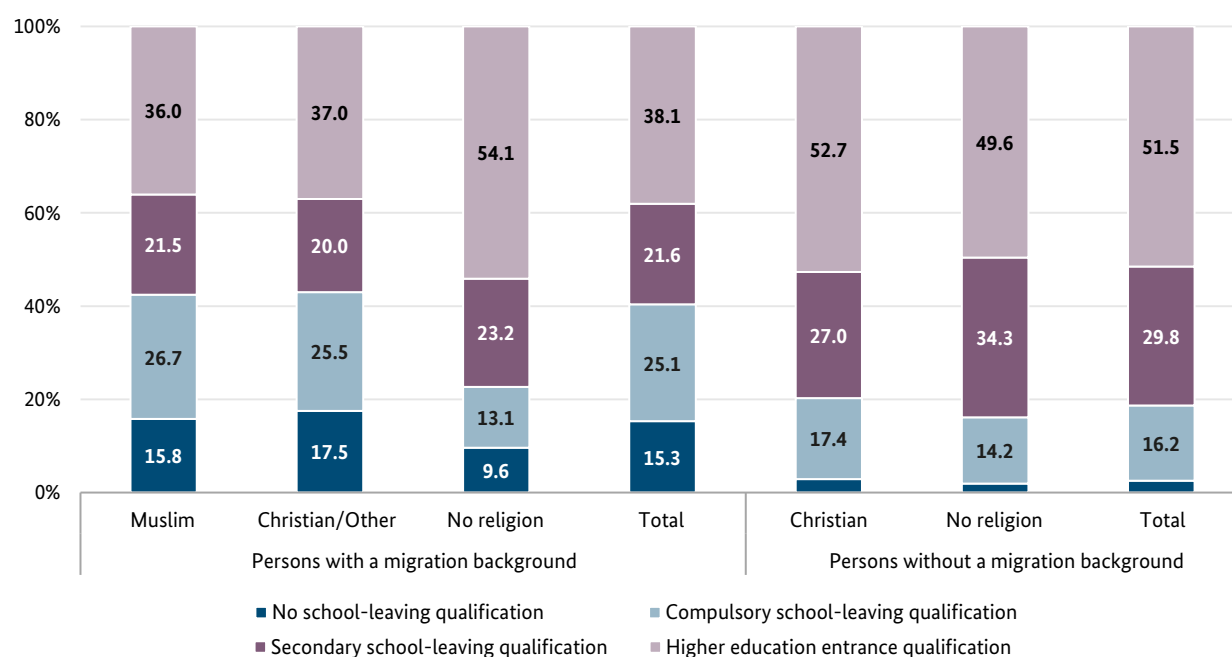
migrant generation. They more often do not have a school-leaving qualification and at the same time the proportion of those with a higher education entrance qualification is lower. Taking the religious affiliation into consideration, there are hardly any differences between Muslims and those of other religions with a migration background (Figure 9). In contrast, people who do not belong to any religion have a higher level of school education.

Among Muslims differences by the region of origin prevail. Individuals from South Asia, a region that is strongly characterized by refugee migration, often do not (yet) have a school-leaving qualification (27 %). This can be explained, particularly in the case of younger first-generation migrants, by the fact that educational biographies had to be interrupted to flee.

Individuals with a migrant background from predominantly Muslim countries also lag behind with regard to vocational qualifications acquired in Germany.⁴ Irrespective of their religious affiliation, the number of people who completed vocational training or university in Germany is significantly lower than that of people without a migrant background (9 % to 59 %). This applies in particular to first-generation immigrants.

4 Degrees obtained abroad are not included here, as they are often not formally recognized.

Figure 9: Highest school-leaving qualification, by migration background and religion (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,763.

Note: Pupils were excluded from the analyses. Values below 3 % are not shown. Persons with a migration background refer exclusively to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

Around three out of four do not have a corresponding qualification (Figure 10). In contrast, the majority of members of subsequent generations acquire a vocational training or university degree in Germany. Religious affiliation has hardly any effect within the group of people born in Germany with a migration background. The strong influence of migration history on vocational education also becomes apparent when comparing groups of origin. In the case of origin groups with a long history of immigration, and thus with a high proportion of members of the successor generations, significantly more persons have completed vocational training or university in Germany than is the case among individuals from regions of origin with shorter immigration histories to Germany and high proportions of recent immigrants.

People with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin are proportionately less likely to be in employment than people without a migration background.

While the proportion of employed persons in the 16-64 age group is 53 % among persons with a migrant background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin, it is 72 % among persons without a migrant background. Comparing employment by religion shows that people who do not belong to any religion achieve the highest employment rate, regardless of their migration background. Hardly any differences ap-

pear between Muslims and members of a Christian or other religion from the respective countries of origin.

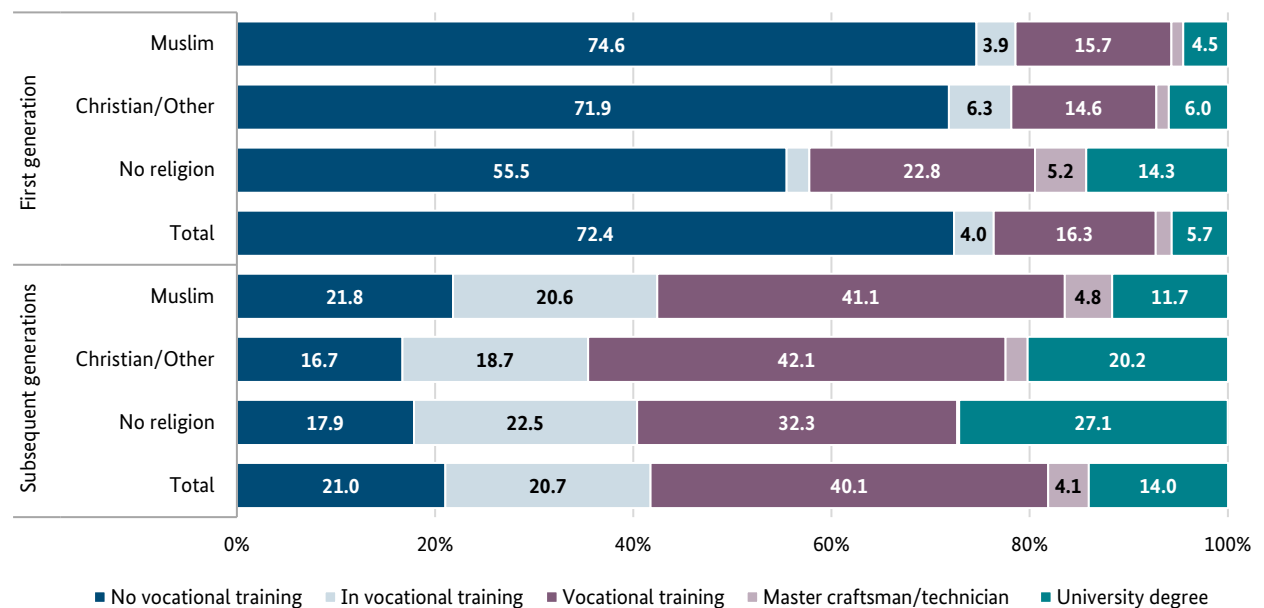
Both among persons with and without a migration background, men are more frequently employed than women (Figure 11). However, the gender differences are greater among people from predominantly Muslim countries of origin: Among people with a migration background, Muslim women have the lowest employment rate (41 %). One explanation for this is that they disproportionately often live in households with one or more children.

No signs of ethnic segregation among Muslims; many feel a strong connection with Germany.

Social integration is a foundation for social cohesion. Associations (so-called 'Vereine') are an important opportunity structure for people to come together. The majority of Muslims who have a membership are members of German associations. The frequency of everyday contacts with people of German origin is also high. In addition, Muslims with fewer social contacts show a strong desire for more frequent contact with persons without a migration background. As in the MLD 2008 study, an explicit tendency towards segregation cannot be found.

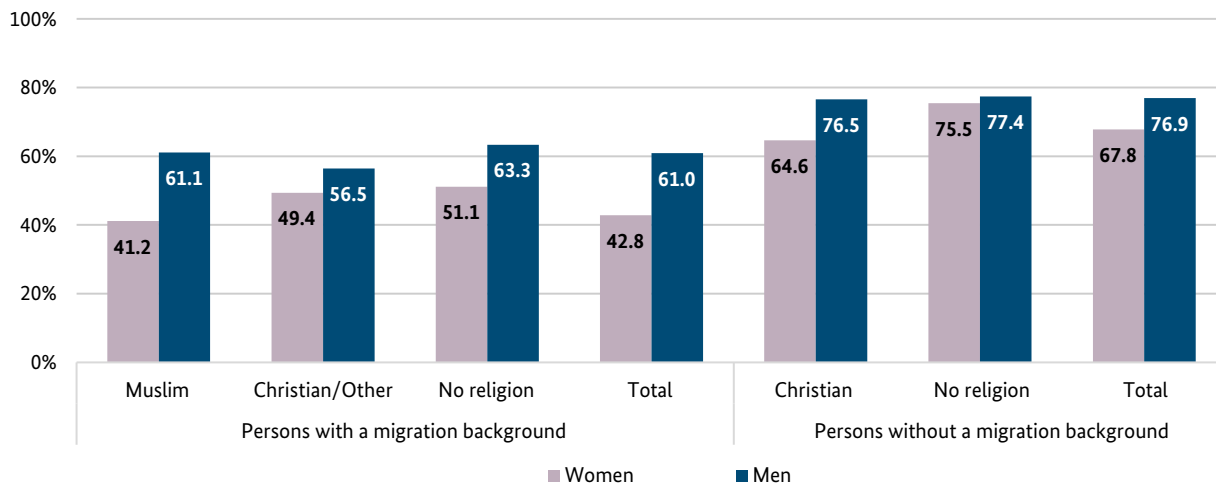
Muslims feel a stronger connection to Germany than people without a migration background. This ap-

Figure 10: Vocational training in Germany of persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin, by immigrant generation and religion (in percent)



Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,230.

Note: Pupils were excluded from the analyses. Values below 3 % are not shown.

Figure 11: Proportion of employed persons aged 16-64 by migration background, religion, and gender (in percent)

Source: MLD 2020, data set of respondents aged 16 and over, weighted. Unweighted number of observations: 4,697.

Note: Persons with a migration background refer exclusively to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

plies equally to first-generation immigrants as well as to those born in Germany. The differences to persons with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin who belong to a different religion or no religion are minor.

The influence of religion on integration is often overestimated with regard to people from predominantly Muslim countries of origin.

It can be concluded that the respective religious affiliation of individuals with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin has no or only a minor influence on the aspects of integration

considered. Differences exist above all between people who belong to a religion and the relatively small group of immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries without a religious affiliation. The latter were relatively more often born in Germany, tend to rate their German language skills better, have more frequently a high level of educational attainment, and have a higher employment rate. Overall, the occasionally observed differences by religious affiliation among persons from predominantly Muslim countries of origin can particularly be attributed to migration-related factors such as generational belonging, length of stay, or reasons for migration.

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